

Final Project Report to the NYS IPM Program, Agricultural IPM 2000 – 2001

Title: Albany County IPM Education Initiative for Albany, Rensselaer and Schenectady Counties.

Project Leader(s): Terry Lavigne, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Albany County Program Assistant

Cooperator(s): Tom Gallagher, Agriculture Program Leader in Albany and Schenectady Counties; Tom Kilcer, area Extension Agronomy Specialist from Cornell Cooperative Extension of Rensselaer County; Ken Wise, Regional Field Crop/Livestock IPM Specialist housed in Schoharie County.

Type of grant: Training practitioners to use IPM techniques.

Project location(s): Wagner Farm, Rensselaer County.

Abstract: Cornell Cooperative Extension of Albany County received \$3,300.00 to prepare and put on four (4) IPM education workshops in the tri-county area. They were held at Wagner Farm in Poestenkill, Rensselaer County. There were an average of nine (9) participants at the three on farm workshops. The fourth meeting is scheduled for Tuesday February 26, 2002 at Cornell Cooperative Extension of Albany County. We had hoped for 12-15 participants each. Workshops were very well received by both farmers and agency personnel. The on farm workshops concentrated on the pests active at that time. No. 1: June 26, 2001, No. 2: August 3, 2001 and No. 3: September 4, 2001. Our intern, Alex Wright, helped set up and organize the meetings and helped with hands on instructions. Producers learned how to ID insects and weed pests and how to manage them using an IPM approach.

Alex was stationed at Wagner's Farm for the majority of her internship as this was our workshop location. This allowed her to become more proficient with scouting and relating with the farmers and workers on a regular basis. This interaction was valuable when she was called on to assist other farmers with scouting procedures, identifying pests or explaining the reasoning behind various Pest Management Practices.

Background and justification: An ICM/IPM program has been on-going in Albany County for seven years. This program has mainly consisted of cost-share covered scouting, soil sampling and related activities. Over the last couple of years, several farmers who have no cost sharing are paying out of their pockets for the program. Presently we have a core group of eight farmers in Albany County who implement IPM on a regular basis on their farms. These eight IPM farmers serve as a model of impact toward our IPM educational program. Several other farmers have expressed interest in learning IPM practices that could be utilized to make their operation more environmentally safe and increase their net profitability. By monitoring/scouting fields on their farms for 1 or 2 seasons combined with the intensive educational programming we can increase the rate of adoption of IPM with field crops. The IPM program will be an integral part of the local Integrated Crop Management program (ICM). The combination of IPM/ICM will help farmers protect the environment and increase net profitability thus sustaining their farm for the future. It is expected that we will be able to almost double the number of farms regularly implementing IPM in the three-county area.

Objectives: To provide individual guidance and instruction from scout, intern or specialist to reinforce concepts taught in the instructional portion of the workshop. To hold workshops that would be extremely hands on and taught how to sweep for pests and sequential sampling and how to identify major economic pests.

Procedures: 1) Participants received individual, hands-on instructions in IPM for weeds, insects, and disease. They learned what economic thresholds are and why they are important. 2) Intern (Alexandra Wright, now a Junior at Cornell University) played a major role in setting up meetings at the farm and helping choose material to use in workshops, as well as helping with instruction. 3) The need for economic thresholds was stressed. 4) The use of short rotations to maximize crop yields and minimize impact from pests, was demonstrated. 5) Evaluations of each workshop indicated that participants learned several new concepts about managing pests.

Results and discussion: Participants were surprised that alfalfa weevil was no longer an economic pest in Eastern New York. They were even more surprised at the economic impact that potato leafhoppers had on their alfalfa stands. Growers resolved to scout their fields in 2002 to see if there is a problem starting, instead of waiting until they have yellow alfalfa. Growers were even more surprised/discouraged to learn that they could

be losing up to seven (7) tons / acre of corn silage on high producing fields solely from corn rootworm. Growers indicated (6 to 1 on surveys) they planned to use short rotations in the future to control corn rootworm and maintain alfalfa quality.

References: (if applicable) NOT APPLICABLE.